

## Contributions

### POSSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA

GEO. F. RONK

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I firmly believe that California will, at some future day, be one of the greatest strongholds for the cause of Christ. When she becomes more thickly settled, and when the influences resulting from the discovery of gold and the consequent immigration into her borders, of vast hordes of adventurers, wear away, then, I believe her people will appear in their true light, and out of the chaos of peoples and customs and tongues, will spring the church Militant and at last the church Triumphant.

The chief difficulties against which Christian workers must battle are the Catholics, the shifting population, and the indifference of the people toward all things spiritual.

The first mentioned, by their doctrines and promise of eternal life to all communicants, render the people impervious to all the efforts of Christian workers. For, I regret to say, this doctrine of faith without works has a fatal attraction to many, so they cast in their lot as followers of Christ, while having no more of the true spirit than the rude Abyssinian Christian. But the power of this thing is fast fading out before the progress of advancing civilization, with the uncultured foreign element which constitutes its chief strength, and man is beginning to look for something more firm and more substantial on which to base his hopes.

The constant moving of the people, which is a serious drawback to the organization of church work, springs from many causes. Probably the chief reason why this is worse in California than in other states, is because when people come here they expect to make a fortune in a day, and being disappointed in this, they become dissatisfied and move to a new locality instead of remaining where they are. This evil will disappear only when the people come to consider California, not as an Eldorado for everybody, but as a place where they can earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

The last of these things which I have mentioned as impediments to the progress of Christianity, is one which affects all countries and all peoples alike. This feeling, or rather lack of feeling, in California, is caused not so much because people do not want to hear, but because they have a distrust of all things until they see them tried and proved. This distrust manifests itself in many ways, and is probably due to the presence of adventurers even within the sacred pre-

cincts of Christ's church. And herein lies one of the chief advantages of the Brethren church, for her principles of total abstinence from intercourse with the world, cannot fail to impress the people where there is so much impurity and unholiness, and where even the churches seem to be in league with the world.

The doctrines of the Brethren Church have been very well received in California, and of all her principles, I believe the one of brotherly love to be the most effectual. The bond of unity holding us together as one family, has a great attraction for the homeless, friendless sinner. It was this which attracted the people to the early church and led them to cast in their all with the followers of Christ. And I have noticed it to be this which attracts people now.

California as a field has boundless limits; but where are the reapers? With the few we have, we have had wonderful success. What could we not do with only a few more! There are many places where we could have services, and we would have reason to expect only the greatest success. Therefore let us labor for the Master with all the talent he has given us; and the Lord aid and prosper us, is my prayer.

#### HONESTY

L. A. HAZLETT

One of our former presidents of the U. S. (Jackson we believe) before selecting or appointing one to office, asked as a first and prime question, "Is he honest?"

If this played so important a sphere and a *very necessary* qualification in civil affairs, ought it not and does it not confront us in the Christian life. This may seem to be rather a queer theme, but we have been prompted to write a few lines. We all know what the term means but do we all realize how broad the term is and how far-reaching its effects to the one who is in the possession of it, and is guided by it.

The world usually applies this term 'honest' right dealing with our fellow-men, giving value for value, taking advantage of no one.

This would change the aspect of many a community and make the world better. But if a man is honest in the true sense of the term, it reaches higher and broader than all this. Not only does it imply right-dealing with our fellow-men, but God. He who is honest, in the clear meaning of the term, *pays what he owes to God*. Serves him, acknowledges him in all he does, loves him and obeys him. He who is honest then, we say must lead a Christian life. I know we find men and women who are honest, as we usually use the term, who pay as they go, owe no one, treat their neighbor fairly in all dealings and yet make no pretensions of a Christian life. Good, honest, moral men we say but can we truthfully

say in the real full and significant meaning of the term that they are honest? Nothing is more desired than to find such honesty shown in the daily walks of life. Let us note the usual construction of the term as used and its effects in a community.

It takes but a short time for the worldling to detect this in a professed Christian. Making due allowance for excuses etc. from the non-professor as his "reasons" for not accepting Christ, does it not work immense harm to the cause of Christ and the prosperity of the church? For instance there is Brother Jones pledged \$25 to the Chicago mission and there is Sister Brown that has failed to pay her \$10 pledge and is the first to "speak out" in meeting and makes the finest of prayers in prayer meeting. But this is not only said of the laity but of the ministry as well. We have learned of some who were the first to pledge to the Chicago Mission and have not paid a cent. *Is he honest?*

This may have saved all the thrusts and insinuations at those who were laboring faithfully in the cause of the Master. Saved them from eating the fodder alone as hinted in a recent number of the EVANGELIST. The cry of mismanagement ought to be buried deep never to be resurrected. That cry was worn threadbare concerning the College. These things hurt the cause of the church. Some of our congregations were getting in away to give to the mission work, were brought to see the need and importance of giving and now the cry of *mismanagement* is enough to scare them into indifference and lethargy. These things ought not to be, and we fear are destructive to the prosperity of our beloved church. The one who had been in charge of the Mission is well known throughout the brotherhood. No need of crying fraud or hinting it. Are we doing right? Are we honest? Had we better get more of 1 Cor. 13 in our lives and hearts and recognize Rom. 13:8 literally and we know our cause will prosper. For "now we know in part"

Nappanee, Ind.

#### PRAYER

ANNA WOOD

Prayer is the sincere desire of the heart. One of the highest honors conferred upon man is that he is enabled to hold communion with God by prayer. No one can hinder our private access to God. Every one can build a chapel in their own breast.

Some may ask the question, Why should we pray at all? God knows all of our desires before we express them and works all things according to the counsel of his own will.

We do not pray in order to inform God of our desires, yet by praying we acknowledge our dependence on him and